Ukrainian Festival by Slava Danilchuk

Christmas celebration in Ukraine 

In Ukraine, the Christmas holidays begin since 2nd of January. Prior to Christmas in the Ukraine, people try to complete almost all important work. As usual, the hostess thoroughly cleans the house, covers the new tablecloth, tries to make new clothes before holiday. On January 4th Ukrainians prepare everything for the future festive Christmas dinner. According to tradition, there should be 12 courses for **Svyatvecher (Christmas**.

To 12 traditional Christmas dishes belong today: **kutya**(boiled wheat, with honey, Voloska nut, poppy seeds and raisins), uzvar (broth made from dried fruits: pears, apples, plums, cherries), buckwheat or millet porridge, beans, boiled peas, vegetable pies with cabbage or fruit, dumplings, mushrooms, stuffed cabbage rolls (boiled rice wrapped in cabbage leaf), and cakes (baked dough bread) with a poppy etc. Kutya is of the particular attention. It and uzvar are prepared first, on Christmas Eve - January 6, at dawn, kutya should be got out of the oven at sunrise, after which it is put up on the table near the window. Kutya should stand in the place of honor in the house.   
   


Previously, traditionally everyone ate of the common bowls. Now this tradition is almost disappeared.

After dinner, people began to sing **Christmas carols**. According to custom, children wear a dinner to their godparents. The first kolyadnyky (carol singers) (usually children) come out in the night with bags for goodies. Caroling (singing folk ritual songs) and entering first in the house of host on Christmas Day can only men who, in accordance with custom, bring peace, rest and prosperity. The hosts presented happily gifts to the children with money and goodies (candies, apples, nuts, etc.). After supper, somewhere in 2-3 or even 4 am, the adults start caroling.

In Volyn, Podillya and Galicia in the evenings there are held fortune-telling. The next day, Ukrainians families go to church for a solemn church service dedicated to Christmas. Then the real holiday begins. On this day, the guests are waited for and treated them generously, and people themselves go to visit old friends, neighbors, good friends.

